



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
MONTANA FIELD OFFICE
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File: M29 (I)

June 12, 2006

Vernon A. Williams, Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Williams:


This is in response to your request dated May 17, 2006 for information regarding the proposed abandonment of 21.25 miles of railroad line (STB Docket No. AB-6 (Sub. No. 434X) BNSF Railway Company). The railroad line is located between milepost 9.50 near Moore and milepost 38.35 near Lewistown, in Fergus County, Montana. We appreciate the opportunity to review this project proposal and provide comments. These comments have been prepared under the authority of and in accordance with the provisions of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et. seq.) and the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et. seq.).

Considering the nature, scope and location of the project, the Service does not anticipate adverse impacts to any federally listed threatened, endangered, candidate or proposed species. There may be state species of concern in the vicinity of the project and we recommend contacting the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 1420 East Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701, 406-444-2535 or the Montana Natural Heritage Program, 1515 East 6th Avenue, Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620-1800, 406-444-5354.

If wetlands are impacted by this project, Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits may be required. The Service suggests any proposed or future project be designed to avoid and minimize impacts to wetland areas, stream channels and surrounding vegetation to the greatest extent possible. Direct, indirect and cumulative impacts, along with future activities required to maintain these improvements, should be analyzed.

The Service appreciates your efforts to incorporate fish and wildlife resource concerns, including threatened and endangered species, into your project planning. If you have questions or comments related to this issue, please contact Katrina Dixon at 406-449-5225 extension 222.

Sincerely,


R. Mark Wilson
Field Supervisor